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REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATION BEARS FRUIT

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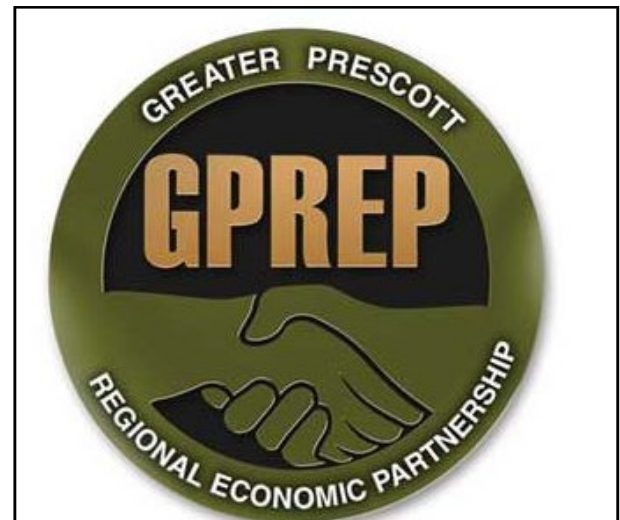
The collaborative energy of private and public leadership in evaluating regional economic development and leveraging community assets is bearing fruit through the Greater Prescott Regional Economic Partnership (GPREP), nurtured over the past few months by extensive care and feeding.

True to its mission of “creating a regional identity to help local companies expand, attract new quality businesses and foster capital investment in the Greater Prescott region,” GPREP has crafted a three-year “blueprint” to enhance job creation in the region with industry-cluster strategies and a comprehensive action plan.

The Economic Development Action Plan 2013-2016, sponsored by APS, was guided by a 20-member Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of Quad City elected officials and municipal managers, along with representatives from Yavapai County, the Yavapai Prescott Indian Tribe, the Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG), higher education and multiple businesses.

The premise of the action plan is that “regionalism” fuels the economic development engine in today’s competitive business recruitment world through leveraged assets, shared resources and public-private cohesiveness. Three industry clusters – from a field of seven – were selected by the committee as the initial focus: manufacturing, aviation and aerospace, and defense and security. Identification and prioritization of the clusters was accomplished via interviews with business community and civic leaders, followed by committee review and finalization.

The action plan’s analysis of regional strengths identified the positives of a high concentration of higher education facilities, “fabulous” quality of life and the presence of the Prescott Regional Airport.



“Our goal is to make our region more competitive with others and ensure a vibrant and self-sustaining economy,” according to Steve Rutherford, GPREP president. “We are pooling our energy and resources on all fronts affecting businesses that we would like to see expand or relocate here to create jobs, services and economic success.”

“Regional economies know no municipal boundaries. The Quad Cities and Yavapai County will only benefit as a whole with the efforts of GPREP, in attracting more industries and becoming more competitive,” stated Keith Watkins, GPREP board member and Senior Vice President of Economic & Rural Development for the Arizona Commerce Authority, from his experience in working with regional economic development groups like GPREP.

GPREP has achieved high goals by forming a strong and representative community-wide board, conducting market research, identifying the three target sectors, developing the action plan, producing a regional marketing brochure and starting a website.

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“Keeping the momentum going requires an expansion of the founding group to include more businesses, civic organizations and regional community supporters,” Rutherford stated. Subcommittees have been established in three work streams: mission, finances and regional structure.

An annual budget of \$200,000 to \$300,000 per year is estimated for fundraising purposes and the need for an executive director or retained contractor has been acknowledged. First year budget solidification and staffing is anticipated by fall 2014.

“Through your investment in GPREP, you will be strengthening our local economy and shaping the future of the region for our children and their children,” Dane Beck, Treasurer of GPREP said. “The soil we are preparing for harvest will spur measurable growth for years to come.”

The group can be reached by contacting Interim Director, Denise Steiger at dsteiger@gprepaz.com or 928-772-4883. Information and discussion about getting involved

also is available through Rutherford or any of the other GPREP officers or board members.

In addition to Rutherford and Beck, GPREP’s officers include Vice President Bob Been. The remaining members are: Yavapai County Supervisor Rowle Simmons, Prescott City Mayor Marlin Kuykendall, Chino Valley Mayor Chris Marley, Dewey/Humboldt Mayor Terry Nolan, Prescott Valley Town Councilman Rick Anderson, City of Prescott Economic Director Jeff Burt, Rick Marcum of the Yavapai Prescott Indian Tribe, Terri Drew of NACOG, David Hall of Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, Keith Watkins of Arizona Commerce Authority, Steve Walker of Yavapai College, John Amos of Yavapai Regional Medical Center, Mike Cole of APS, Mike Kinnison of BBVA Compass Bank, Harry Chandler of Prescott Fine Homes, Dave Barrett of Barrett Propane, and Tracey Horn of Helken & Horn Advertising Agency.

